



NEWS RELEASE

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FLOWER MOUND COUPLE CONVICTED OF TAX EVASION

(Sherman, TX) United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig announced today that a Flower Mound couple has been convicted of tax evasion in the Eastern District of Texas. The guilty verdict was returned late Friday against **JAMES VAN METER**, 55, and **ANITA VAN METER**, 54, following a one-week trial before United States District Judge Richard Schell. The Van Meters were immediately taken into federal custody following the verdict.

U.S. Attorney Orwig was pleased with the verdict, "Regardless of how many years may pass and how well you may think you have hidden your assets, tax evasion is a sure ticket to incarceration. Just like the board game: You won't pass GO, you won't collect \$200, just go directly to prison"

According to information presented at trial, during the tax years 1999 and 2000, the Van Meters owned and operated The Wellness Center, a homeopathic business where they provided services and sold products to various clients. At trial, prosecutors presented the testimony of 39 witnesses in less than three days and introduced almost 200 exhibits establishing that the Van Meters had failed to file income tax returns and pay taxes since 1989 and had used a combination of off-shore entities and third-party trusts in order to willfully attempt to evade paying income taxes.

Lance Sumpter, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Dallas IRS-Criminal

Investigation Office stated, "The jury's verdict reaffirms that this is a nation of laws. When James and Anita Van Meter chose to break the law and evade paying income tax by using offshore bank accounts and an offshore credit/debit card to conceal their income, they chose the inevitable consequences: a federal conviction for tax evasion."

The Van Meters each face up to ten years in federal prison at sentencing. A sentencing date has not been set.

The case is being investigated by the Internal Revenue Service and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Shamoil T. Shipchandler and J. Andrew Williams.

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